

Ole Ukena

Contemporary artist · Berlin-trained · Bali · Berlin

CURRICULUM VITAE

SEPTEMBER 2026

Biography

Ole Ukena (b. 1983, Germany) is a contemporary artist living and working between Bali and Berlin, with extended formative periods in India, Thailand, Brazil, and Mexico. The practice operates in the tradition of Joseph Beuys's *erweiterter Kunstbegriff* — the expanded concept of art — extending across studio object-making, distributed participatory artworks, spatial commissions, social-form frames, and pedagogical projects as one continuous artistic operation.

Ukena's practice spans two registers held in parallel for two decades. The first is conceptual — *PEACE* (~20,000 toy soldiers forming a peace sign as diptych), *TRUST* (~15,000 nails: oriented one way they threaten, rotated 180° they form structural support and the word *trust*), *RAINBOW* (barbed wire), *CHER*, *CHAIR*, *SHARE*, *LOOK AT YOUR/SELF*, *THE ONE AND ONLY TRUTH*, and most recently *CINIS* (2026), a time-bound conceptual work created for a wedding with a programmed seven-year fade. These works compress opposed terms into single material objects in the lineage of Marcel Broodthaers, Mona Hatoum, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres.

The second register is intuitive and material: large-scale embroidered textile paintings made since 2017 with a sustained studio of artisans in Ubud. The methodology is chalk drawn fast on dark fabric under a flow-state rule, executed by named team members across material translation delays in series-form feedback loops, on reflective surfaces that shift with light and viewer position. The *Multiverse* series (2020–) extends this into mandalic structures whose rule of identical eight-fold repetition is designed to fail, and whose human imperfection is the registered subject of the work.

Education

Trained at the Universität der Künste Berlin (2003–2009) as **Meisterschüler** of **Lothar Baumgarten**. Also attended, in parallel, **Katharina Sieverding's** *Visual Culture Studies* class, **Hito Steyerl's** class (guest professor 2007/08) and **Daniel Richter's** class — naming Steyerl as the teacher who most shaped him.

The seven registered artistic frames

Each frame is a registered artistic project in the erweiterter Kunstbegriff tradition: a constructed condition under which work — the artist's own and others' — emerges.

Spielraum

2005 · BERLIN

[CRE8 Foundation](#)

2011–2018 · BERLIN · COLOGNE · 40+ COUNTRIES

[AIR \(Open Artist Residency\)](#)

2013– · DOWNTOWN UBUD · KENDERAN · BALI

[UKENA](#)

2020– · BERLIN · BALI

[I AM YOU](#)

2024– · BALI · GLOBAL

[UNFUCK YOUR CREATIVITY](#)

2024– · BALI · GLOBAL

[CINIS](#)

2026 · BALI · TULUM

Selected institutional placements

Centre Pompidou, Paris (2011)

Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2010)

Grand Palais · Paris Photo (2013)

Genezarethkirche Berlin · permanent commission
(2022)

Zona Maco Mexico City (2026)

Selected exhibitions

- 2026 [*Salto a lo Desconocido*](#) · Nômade Temple, Ibiza · 15–31 August · within Sacred Sun · Total Eclipse (programme co-curator)
- 2026 *Zona Maco* · Mexico City
- 2022 *Church of Now (Space Bloom / Weltraumblüte)* · Genezarethkirche Berlin · permanent commission · Berlin Art Week
- 2021 *Flowstate* · Funkhaus, Berlin
- 2015–2017 *Gone Surfing (Personal Journey)* · Bali, Indonesia
- 2014 *Hijacking Karma* · Stigter Van Doesburg Gallery, Amsterdam
- 2014 *Mixology* · Numthong Gallery at Aree, Bangkok
- 2013 *Paris Photo* · Grand Palais, Paris
- 2013 *Des fleurs ne sont rien!* · Galerie Odile Ouizeman, Paris
- 2013 *Giving Up Is Not An Option (Solo)* · Serindia Gallery, Bangkok
- 2011 *Connected Creativity (with CRE8 Foundation)* · Bangkok Art and Culture Centre
- 2011 *Hors Pistes* · Centre Pompidou, Paris
- 2011 *Hetik* · DST Gallery, Münster
- 2010 *Chambres a Part IV* · La Réserve, Paris
- 2010 *Something Strange Happened Here* · Taittinger Collection, Brussels
- 2010 *Souvenirs on Earth* · Palais de Tokyo, Paris
- 2010 *Meisterschülerausstellung* · University of the Arts, Berlin
- 2009 *Chambres a Part III* · La Réserve, Paris
- 2009 *Flashback (Solo)* · DST Galerie, Münster
- 2008 *Loop Video Festival* · Barcelona
- 2007 *4. Berliner Kunstsalon* · Berlin
- 2006 *Trauma & Art* · Spielraum Gallery, Berlin
- 2005 *Whatever this is* · Premise Gallery, San Diego

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